

Message Text

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QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 11512

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, FR, XF, SY, LE

SUBJECT: GROMYKO AND SYTENKO ON LEBANON, MIDDLE EAST

1. SUMMARY. GROMYKO COMMENTS TO SAUVAGNARGES PROVIDE CONFIRMATION OF SOVIET CONCERN OVER LEBANESE SITUATION, AND INDICATE SOVIETS STILL UNHAPPILY STUCK ON HORNS OF THEIR DILEMMA. HE INSISTED ON NECESSITY FOR SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL, DEFENDED PLO, AND SAID SOLUTION TO PROBLEM SHOULD ENTAIL SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL, CEASE-FIRE FOLLOWED BY CONFERENCE OF ALL PARTIES, AND NON-INTERVENTION BY OUTSIDE FORCES. SYTENKO SAID THAT MINOR ADJUSTMENTS OF ISRAELI 1967 BORDERS MIGHT BE POSSIBLE PROVIDED ISRAEL FIRST AGREED TO RETURN TO ITS 1967 BOUNDARIES. END SUMMARY.

2. FRENCH AMB DE LEUSSE HAS PROVIDED FOLLOWING RUNDOWN ON ME PORTION OF GROMYKO-SAUVAGNARGUES TALKS JULY 16:

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--GROMYKO WAS FIRMLY INSISTENT ON SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL, APPEARED AS

PROTECTOR OF PLO, SAID IN EFFECT THAT
ANYTHING WAS BETTER THAN FIGHTING LEFTISTS IN LEBANON.
FOR PALESTINIANS, SAID GROMYKO, SITUATION WAS MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH

--GROMYKO OUTLINED THREE ELEMENTS NECESSARY FOR SOLUTION OF
J3?-3 3 :48 8 --SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM LEBANON, CEASE-FIRE
FOLLOWED BY A CONFERENCE OF ALL PARTIES, AND NON-INTERVENTION BY
ANY OUTSIDE FORCE. GROMYKO SAID BASIC NEED IS TO RESTORE
CONDITIONS IN LEBANON TO WHAT THEY WERE PRIOR TO ENTRY OF SYRIAN
TROOPS.

3. SAUVAGNARGUES AGREED THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO
INTERVENTION BY OUTSIDE PARTIES. HE EXPLAINED THAT FRENCH
OFFER TO SEND TROOPS WAS PREDICATED ON TWO CONDITIONS:
ESTABLISHMENT OF A CEASE-FIRE AND ACCEPTANCE
BY ALL PARTIES, INCLUDING INTERESTED PARTIES OUTSIDE
REGION SUCH AS USSR. SINCE THESE PRECONDITIONS OBVIOUSLY
NOT MET, FRENCH OFFER WAS MOOT. SAUVAGNARGUES
THEN OBSERVED THAT IN ANY EVENT, FRANCE HAS NO MEANS OF
INTERVENTION AND ASSUMES SAME IS TRUE OF USSR. GROMYKO
SURPRISED FRENCH BY TAKING ISSUE WITH LATTER STATEMENT.
TO THE CONTRARY, SOVIET UNION DOES HAVE MEANS TO INTERVENE, HE
SAID.

4. BRITISH AMBASSADOR SMITH DISCUSSED MIDDLE EAST WITH MFA NEAR
EASTERN COUNTRIES CHIEF SYTENKO JULY 15. HE REPORTED THAT
SYTENKO WAS SEIZED WITH "PESSIMISTIC RESIGNATION" OVER
LEBANESE SITUATION AND DENIED THAT ANY NEW SOVIET INITIATIVE IN
LEBANON WAS IN THE WORKS.
SYTENKO SAID KHADDAM VISIT WAS AT SYRIAN INITIATIVE AND
THAT KHADDAM HAD TOLD SOVIETS SYRIANS WOULD PULL OUT AS
SOON AS THEY COULD.

5. SYTENKO FELT THAT GENEVA WAS STILL PLACE TO SEEK OVERALL
ME SETTLEMENT, BUT HE DID NOT SEEM ANXIOUS TO
TALK ABOUT THE OVERALL ME PROBLEM DUE TO HIS PREOCCUPA-
TION WITH LEBANON. HE DID SHOW SOME FLEXIBILITY--
UNUSUAL FOR HIM--ON POSSIBLE ISRAELI BORDER ADJUSTMENTS,
HOWEVER, SAYING THAT MINOR CHANGES MIGHT BE PERMISSIBLE, BUT
ONLY AFTER ISRAEL FIRST RETURNED TO ITS 1967 BOUNDARIES.
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6. COMMENT. REPORTS TALLY WITH OUR OWN PERCEPTION
OF CURRENT SOVIET PESSIMISM RE LEBANON. IN ANY CASE,
GROMYKO'S COMMENT ON INTERVENTION IS WORTH NOTING AS
REMINDER THAT USSR IS GREAT POWER AND FRANCE IS NOT,
THUS GIVING HIS STATEMENT ELEMENT OF IMPLICIT THREAT.
MATLOCK

UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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